

REMARKS

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner took the following actions:

- (i) objected to claims 16 and 22 due to alleged informalities;
- (ii) rejected claims 16, 19, 31, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 2,051,591 to Brogan ("Brogan"); and
- (iii) objected to claims 17, 18, 20-30, 32, 34, and 35 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By this reply, Applicant has amended claims 16 and 19-22. Accordingly, claims 16-35 remain pending in this application. No prohibited new matter has been introduced by this reply. Applicant acknowledges and appreciates the indication that claims 17, 18, 20-30, 32, 34, and 35 contain allowable subject matter.

I. The Claim Objections

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 16 and 22 were objected to because of alleged informalities. With respect to independent claim 16, the Office Action alleges that the term "particularly" is indefinite, the phrase "the vicinity" lacks antecedent basis, and that a cavity is not formed "on" something, but rather, is formed "in" an object.

By this reply, claim 16 has been amended such that the term "particularly" has been deleted, the phrase "the vicinity" has been changed to "a vicinity," and the phrase "a cavity is formed on said object" has been changed to "a cavity is formed in said object," consistent with the Examiner's comments and recommendations. Thus, claim 16, as amended, no longer includes the alleged deficiencies. Applicant, therefore, requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claim 16.

With respect to independent claim 22, the Office Action alleges that the phrase "said ball" lacks antecedent basis. By this reply, claim 22 has been amended such that

the phrase "said ball" has been changed to "at least one retractable ball." Thus, claim 22, as amended, no longer includes the alleged deficiency. Applicant, therefore, requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claim 22.

II. The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 16, 19, 31, and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Brogan. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this claim rejection. M.P.E.P. § 2131 states that "[a] claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." Brogan fails to disclose or suggest each and every element in the amended claims, whether expressly or inherently, and thus, Brogan does not anticipate the amended claims.

Amended independent claim 16 recites, *inter alia*, "[a]n assembly comprising an object, a support and, on said support, a fixing element . . . defining a pivot axis . . . in such a way that said object and said support can be reversed independently of each other, and in order to present alternately a first face and a second face of said support . . . and in that a cavity is formed in said object, said cavity comprising a first opening . . . and . . . an elongate second opening extending transversely with respect to the direction of said pivot axis . . . said support also comprising retractable locking means." Brogan fails to disclose or suggest these features of claim 16.

Brogan discloses a clasp body in FIGS. 7 and 8, including extensions (a) with separate apertures 41 and 42. See Brogan at page 2, column 1, lines 30-33, 39, and 40. Apertures 41 and 42 each have slots extending therefrom. See id. at page 2, column 1, lines 31-33. In order to attach a string of beads to the clasp body, a ball

end 32 of a connecting member 31 is passed through one of apertures 41 and 42, and drawn along the slot extending from the aperture to engage a metal spring plate within the clasp body. See id. at FIG. 8; and page 2, column 1, lines 3-7, 31-40, and 45-49.

Page 2 of the Office Action asserts that connecting member 31 defines a pivot axis. Brogan, however, does not teach that the slots extending from apertures 41 and 42 extend transversely with respect to the alleged pivot axis defined by connecting member 31. See, e.g., FIGS. 7 and 8 of Brogan. Rather, Brogan teaches that the slots extending from apertures 41 and 42 extend in the same direction as connecting member 31. Thus, Brogan fails to disclose or suggest, "a fixing element . . . defining a pivot axis . . . and . . . an elongate second opening extending transversely with respect to the direction of said pivot axis," as recited in independent claim 16. For at least this reason, Brogan does not anticipate claim 16.

Moreover, Brogan teaches that connecting member 31 is attached to each end of a bead string or chain, and that connecting member 31 includes ball end 32, a stem 33, a shank 34, and an attaching ring 36. See Brogan at page 1, column 2, lines 47-50. However, Brogan does not teach that the bead string or chain, or connecting member 31, includes a retractable locking means. While Brogan teaches that connecting member 31 engages a spring plate, the spring plate is in the clasp body. See id. at page 2, column 1, lines 11-22 and 35-44. Thus, Brogan fails to disclose or suggest, "said support also comprising retractable locking means," as recited in independent claim 16. For at least this additional reason, Brogan does not anticipate claim 16.

Furthermore, Brogan does not teach that the bead string or chain and the clasp body, shown in FIGS. 7 and 8, can be reversed independently of each other in order to present alternately a first face and a second face of the bead string or chain. Brogan merely teaches that when connecting the bead string or chain to the clasp body, shank 34 of connecting member 31 is seated, with a slight spring tension, in a concavity in the clasp body. See Brogan at page 2, lines 16-21 and 43-45; and FIGS. 7 and 8. Since Brogan does not teach that the bead string or chain and the clasp body can be reversed independent of each other in order to present alternately a first face and a second face of the bead string or chain, Brogan fails to disclose or suggest, "said object and said support can be reversed independently of each other, and in order to present alternately a first face and a second face of said support," as recited in independent claim 16. For at least this additional reason, Brogan does not anticipate claim 16.

Accordingly, for at least the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 16, and the timely allowance of claim 16, is respectfully requested. Dependent claims 19, 31, and 33 each depend from claim 16, and as such, each of the dependent claims includes the features recited in claim 16. Therefore, claims 19, 31, and 33 are allowable for at least the reasons stated above with respect to claim . In addition, each of the dependent claims recites unique combinations that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited art, and therefore each is also separately patentable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

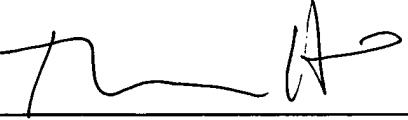
Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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